

IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-63. (canceled)

64.-69. (withdrawn)

70. (previously amended) An apparatus for ablating body tissue using radio frequency (RF) energy, comprising:

a catheter having a proximal portion attachable to a source of electrolyte fluid, a distal portion sized for insertion into a patient's body, and a lumen for delivering fluid from the proximal portion to the distal portion;

an expandable member disposed on the distal portion of the catheter, the expandable member defining an interior region in communication with the lumen; and

an RF electrode on the distal portion and communicating with the lumen, the electrode configured for coupling to a source of RF energy, whereby RF energy may be transferred from the electrode to selected tissue areas in a patient's body via electrolyte fluid delivered through the lumen and into the interior region of the expandable member.

71. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the expandable member has a substantially planar distal end.

72. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the expandable member is attached to the distal portion such that a substantially smooth outer surface profile is presented by the distal portion.

73. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the distal portion extends into an interior space of the expandable member.

74. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the expandable member defines an interior space in communication with the lumen and wherein the electrode is disposed within the interior space.

75. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 74, wherein the electrode comprises a plurality of apertures, the apertures allowing electrolyte fluid to pass therethrough into the interior space.

76. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the expandable member further comprises a plurality of perforations to allow flow of electrolyte fluid from an interior space of the expandable member to the selected tissue areas beyond the expandable member.

77. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the electrode is disposed within the lumen.

78. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 70, wherein the electrode extends from the distal portion of the catheter, the electrode comprising an interior communicating with the lumen.

79. (previously amended) A method for ablating body tissue, comprising:
inserting a distal portion of a tubular member into the patient's body, the distal portion comprising an expandable member in a collapsed condition and an electrode within an interior space of the expandable member;
positioning the distal portion of the tubular member proximate a target site;
directing electrolyte fluid through the lumen of the tubular member and into the interior space of the expandable member; and
energizing the electrode with electrical energy, thereby transferring electrical energy from the electrode through the expandable member via the electrolyte fluid to ablate the target site.

80. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein the expandable member comprises a plurality of perforations through which the electrolyte fluid flows to the target site.

81. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein the expandable member is expanded as electrolyte fluid is directed into the interior space.

82. (previously amended) An apparatus for ablating body tissue using radio frequency (RF) energy, comprising:
- a source of RF energy;
 - a catheter having a proximal portion attachable to a source of electrolyte fluid, a distal portion sized for insertion into a patient's body, and a lumen for delivering fluid from the proximal portion to the distal portion;
 - a porous member attached to the distal portion of the catheter, the porous member defining an interior region in communication with the lumen, the interior region capable of receiving electrolyte fluid delivered from the proximal portion of the catheter; and
 - an electrode disposed in the interior region and coupled to the source of RF energy.
83. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 82, wherein the electrode extends from the distal portion of the catheter.
84. (previously added) The apparatus of claim 82, wherein the porous member has a substantially planar distal end.